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BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

URBAN H. BROUGHTON

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THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

BY

URBAN H. BROUGHTON
M.P.

LONDON
1916

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TO MY FRIENDS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FROM 1887 to 1912 I lived, worked, and was happy in your country, and acquired a profound admiration for the enterprise and energy of your people. My greatest treasure and my material possessions are of your country. Nevertheless, I am "first, last, and all the time" an Englishman.

Some of you have suggested that Great Britain was not doing her full share in the terrible catastrophe that has overtaken Europe. That suggestion is based on an illusion;

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and if I can help to dispel it by these brief notes, in which accuracy is the chief aim, I shall be rewarded.

The goodwill of the people of your country has been of incalculable value to us and to our Allies; and a continuance of that goodwill after the war will go far to establish a world-wide and lasting peace.

URBAN H. BROUGHTON

LONDON, 30 *September*, 1916

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

THE ARMY

GREAT BRITAIN is not a military state. It maintained a relatively small professional standing army, sufficient for its needs in ordinary times—well disciplined, well equipped, and with splendid traditions which have been lived up to in the present war. Before the war, the total effective strength of the regular forces of the British Empire, including the Indian Army and Colonial and native

Indian Corps, was 243,357. The Territorials and reserves of all kinds numbered 468,218, a total force of 711,575 men—a mere pigmy compared with Continental armies. Twelve days after the outbreak of war, the greater part of the Expeditionary Force of 140,000 men was in France, and the remainder shortly afterwards. This Expeditionary Force had to bear the brunt of the onslaught of Germany's undiminished power; and it is almost miraculous that the force was not totally destroyed. Lord Kitchener was appointed Secretary of State for War on 5th August 1914. His vision was particularly clear in regard to the war. He first called for half a million men; and the response

was magnificent. Prior to the war, the annual recruitment was 30,000; so it can be readily imagined what the difficulties of the authorities were when more than that number presented themselves daily! They simply could not cope with the numbers. Men had to stand for days outside the recruiting offices before they could be examined and attested; and when enlisted, had to sleep for nights without proper accommodation, and suffered great bodily discomfort without complaint. A second half-million were called for soon afterwards; by this time the authorities were able, by putting forth the most strenuous efforts, to deal with the men presenting themselves as far as reasonable com-

forts were concerned; but they could not be immediately supplied with clothing or equipment. The first increase of the Army by half a million was sanctioned by Parliament in August 1914. This increase was quickly followed by others, until, in December 1915, the sanctioning of another million raised the total authorized land forces to 4,000,000 men. These numbers are exclusive of the forces of the Indian Empire and Overseas Dominions. Voluntary enlistment continued, with rises and falls (the numbers always increasing after a Zeppelin raid), until January 1916, when the first Military Service Act was passed.

The British people are not imaginative; but in the spring of 1916 it

became evident that to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion in the shortest period of time, and as an earnest to our Allies of our grim determination, a more drastic Compulsory Service Act was necessary. Consequently a second Military Service Act was passed in May 1916, which made service in the Army compulsory for all men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one, except such as properly constituted tribunals exempted as being necessary for other national service. All sorts of dire consequences were predicted by a small but unsatisfactory element at the time this Bill was proposed; but when it became an Act, it was accepted calmly by the people as a national necessity.

From the beginning of the war up to this date, the naval and military effort of the British Empire exceeded five millions of men; a magnificent record, notwithstanding that these figures include those who were rejected on medical grounds.

To have raised in less than two years in Great Britain such an immense voluntary army proves that British Democracy is not decadent; and to have equipped it is no mean accomplishment. By common consent of neutrals and others, no other army has ever been so well fed in the field as is the British Army to-day; and to achieve this result, thousands of tons of food and forage have to be landed daily in France.

The British Army has, during the

last two years, been fighting in various parts of the world, and has had on hand at the same time eight separate and distinct campaigns, some of which have now been satisfactorily concluded. It is too soon to speak of the deeds of arms of the British Empire. These can be left to the historian, by whom it will be shown that the part played by the original Expeditionary Force and by the troops in the two battles of Ypres and the battle of the Somme had no small influence on the issue of the war.

The military effort of the British Empire has not yet been unduly stretched. There are in the United Kingdom alone between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 men of military age

who do not yet form part of the army. They are employed upon work of national importance, which will require a smaller number of men as time goes on; and there are still vast numbers available in the Overseas Dominions, in India, and Africa.

Every one of the Overseas Dominions has contributed in a truly magnificent manner to swelling the Army; and Great Britain gratefully acknowledges the efforts of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the great Indian Empire, not to mention smaller but equally patriotic Colonies.

Since August 1914, the number of officers commissioned approximates to the total number of all ranks of the Expeditionary Force. These

have been drawn from the Universities, Public Schools, Medical and Law Schools; from both Houses of Parliament; from the Law, Medicine, ranks of the Regular Army, and Commerce; and even from the Church. The two Military Schools for officers of the Regular Army have turned out per year many times the normal numbers. All these officers have devoted themselves strenuously to learning as much as possible in the shortest time, and they learned enough to lead their men most gallantly and to show an utter disregard for death. The Army to-day is a Citizen Army, in which the general standard of intelligence has never been surpassed by that of any army. It is an

army which will have to be reckoned with, though it may have been "contemptible" in numbers two years ago.

THE NAVY

The only sphere in which Great Britain was prepared in 1914 was at sea. By reason and necessity she is a sea-faring nation. No place in the United Kingdom is a hundred miles from tide-water; and even to the dullest mind it must be clear that without supremacy at sea she must fall a prey to any country possessing that supremacy—for "General Starvation" will always be the most-feared General in a conflict between Great Britain and any first-class

power. If Great Britain is to continue to exist, she must maintain a supreme Navy, no matter what sacrifices this may entail. The day on which she commences to economize on her Navy will be the first day of her downward career. For two years, in fair weather and in foul, the British Fleet has kept the seas. The German Fleet has remained in port, with one exception, when she left her shelters for a brief period, to hurry back after inflicting a "defeat" on the British—a "victory" which she does not appear to be very zealous to take advantage of.

The British Navy has traditions: the German Navy has none. The Navy is Great Britain's sure shield; and the work she has done, though

silent, has been gigantic. She has kept the seas open to British and neutral shipping; she has transported enormous numbers of troops to various theatres of war with almost negligible loss; she has swept the German mercantile marine (5,500,000 tons) from the face of the seas. No language can adequately describe her work. It can be summed up by saying that she has in simple verity saved the Allies from defeat. France, notwithstanding her superb valour, could not alone have saved her ports from seizure in the autumn of 1914; and if that had taken place, she must of necessity have been reduced in a comparatively short time.

The British Navy has not only

had to contend against that of the enemy, but in addition constantly against the elements and the countless number of mines sowed promiscuously by the enemy, to the detriment of neutral as well as belligerent shipping. The Navy's losses in ships and men have been grievous, but not greater than those of the enemy, and therefore relatively not nearly so great.

The new problem for the Navy was to find an antidote to the submarine; and this has been effectively evolved. In the first place, fishing-boats, trawlers, drifters, and yachts, to the number of 3000, were taken over and fitted with guns and other equipment of a secret nature. These were manned by a force of over

100,000 men, selected from trawler crews and fishermen, all inured to the sea and skilled in the use of nets. To this auxiliary fleet were added fast motor-boats for scouting purposes. Among the officers of this fleet are to be found retired naval men, from admirals down, yachtsmen, trawler skippers, and officers of merchantmen. The work done by the auxiliary fleet in destroying enemy submarines, in sweeping up mines, in taking care of neutral shipping, has been of an amazing character. When the number of enemy submarines destroyed, now known to the British and German Admiralties, is given out, the world will be astounded, and especially the German people.

The Navy is to-day, after taking all losses into consideration, infinitely more powerful than at the commencement of the war. At Glasgow, in September 1916, the First Lord of the Admiralty said:

"So far as my knowledge goes, there is no part of our naval strength in which we have not got at this moment a greater supply, and in some departments an incomparably greater supply, than we had on the 4th of August 1914."

Whatever else may happen in this war, one thing is certain—the supremacy of the seas will not be wrested from Great Britain.

AIR SERVICES

Great Britain prior to the war had only a few lighter-than-air craft, but now possesses a large number, which are employed principally in sea services. Air-craft of the Zeppelin type was not developed, as British experts were of opinion that it had but little military value.

Zeppelins have been used by the enemy for sea-scouting and to invade the British Isles under cover of darkness and murder civilians indiscriminately, both in the country and in open towns, which latter are described as "fortresses." Between thirty and forty Zeppelin raids have taken place, the number of air-

ships employed at a time varying from one to twelve, with the result that, notwithstanding the fantastic accounts in the German Press, no military damage has been inflicted, but unfortunately a number of houses have been destroyed and many hundreds of civilians killed and injured.

Zeppelin raids cannot have the slightest effect upon the outcome of the war, but they will have considerable effect upon the terms of peace.

The British nation has shown admirable composure under the Zeppelin "frightfulness," which has not produced the results hoped for.

At first adequate defences were lacking, but now, by means of

innumerable stations fitted with special guns and powerful search-lights, and night-flying machines, these raiders can no longer visit this country with impunity. The British have totally destroyed eight Zeppelins and damaged others.

With regard to heavier-than-air craft, Great Britain in the earlier periods of the war gained a supremacy over the enemy which has been maintained. Evidence bears out the statement that comparatively few enemy aeroplanes are now over the British lines, whilst British pilots are constantly over the enemy lines, which results in effective artillery work.

The Air Services are particularly attractive to the youth of Great

Britain, and the supply of pilots is equal to all demands.

The strength of the Air Services of the Army and Navy has expanded since August 1914 to a greater degree than any other branch of the services.

MUNITIONS

Prior to the war, Great Britain's output of munitions was based upon the requirements of an army of 200,000 men; and there were only three national factories working for land service. Immediately upon the outbreak of war, large orders were placed for munitions; but it is one thing to place orders and another to ensure their completion on time,

when armament firms are short of the necessary plant. It is unfortunately a fact that the Army during the first year of the war suffered from shortage of all kinds of munitions, which fact led to the setting up of a Ministry of Munitions in June 1915. The Ministry of Munitions, although it has been in existence only fifteen months, has on its Central Staff over 5000 persons, and controls an expenditure of over $5,000,000 a day. There are now 95 national factories working for land service, nearly all of which have been planned, built, and are operated by the Ministry of Munitions; and 4319 firms working upon war material are controlled by this Ministry.

By June of this year the number of persons employed under this Ministry was over 2,250,000, of which about 400,000 are women. Forty-five thousand skilled men have been released from the Army and are now employed in munition factories, and many hundreds of people have been trained in schools as tool setters, lead burners, plumbers, gauge makers, etc.

Women are now employed upon some 500 different munition processes, two-thirds of which had never previously been performed by women.

The following statement was made in the House of Commons by the Minister of Munitions in August this year:

"The output which in 1914–1915 it took twelve whole months to produce, can now be attained from home sources in the following periods:

"For 18-pounder ammunition in three weeks.

"For field howitzer ammunition in two weeks.

"For medium-sized shell in eleven days.

"For heavy shell in four days."

At present there are being turned out in a month nearly twice as many big guns as were in existence for land service fifteen months ago; and the present rate of output will eventually be nearly doubled; and this when approximately half the

engineering capacity of the country is still working for the Navy.

The total number of machine-guns in existence fifteen months ago can now be produced in from three to four weeks at the present rate of output.

The output of rifles for the last year has been three times that of the first year of the war. The equipping of the Army now overseas as regards machine-guns and rifles has been wholly done from home sources.

The home production of small-arms ammunition is now three times as much per week as a year ago, and a large surplus stock has been built up.

The production of high explosives

is sixty-six times as large as it was at the beginning of 1915, by far the greater part of it being produced in Government factories.

A substantial quantity of finished munitions — such as shells, field howitzers, heavy guns, grenades, machine-guns, and small-arms ammunition — is now being manufactured in the national factories and by private firms for the Allies. Great Britain is sending to France one-third of the whole British production of shell steel. Metals to the value of $30,000,000 monthly, and very large quantities of constituents of explosives, are also being sent to the Allies.

Great Britain is supplying the Allies with millions of tons of coal

and coke per month, with machinery, and 20 per cent. of the present machine-tool production of the country.

Whilst Great Britain has accomplished much in the way of munitions in the past two years, she is under no delusion, but knows that a great deal remains to be done. Home resources must be fully developed, so strenuous efforts are being made in that direction. Great Britain will not be satisfied that she has put forth her full strength until the Army's equipment of heavy artillery is very considerably increased, and until further output of munitions of all sorts will enable her to supply the Allies with what they need. She expects to be in a

position to do this before many months have passed.

ATTITUDE OF THE COUNTRY

Whatever may have been the attitude of the people during the first few months of the war, there is no mistaking the attitude now. Business-men, Operatives, Peasants, the Rich, the Poor—all know that they are face to face with a powerful and ruthless enemy, who believes that might is the supreme law, and who, so long as he possesses that might, will commit any crime against God and man. That knowledge has crystallized into a grim determination to carry on, at whatever cost in life and treasure, until the power of

the enemy is broken. A war such as the present one cannot be waged except by the will of the people; and they have shown that will, recognizing to the full what their lot would be if the enemy became all-powerful in Europe. Changes have taken place in Great Britain during the last two years that would have been considered impossible in July two years ago. Organized labour, which for the last forty years has been struggling to secure adequate recognition and recompense, immediately upon the outbreak of war, called a truce in its disputes, and this truce has in the main been honourably kept. It put aside all its regulations in respect of hours of labour, overtime, the exclusion of

women and others from certain classes of occupation. The Government has justly promised organized labour the restoration of all its rights and privileges when peace is concluded; and, in addition, the nation will ever acknowledge the debt. The women of Great Britain of all classes have come nobly to the front. In addition to the many thousands serving as nurses and clerks (which may be considered their natural avocations), hundreds of thousands are doing heavy work in munition and other factories. Others are filling the places of men as tram and bus conductors, engine cleaners, agricultural labourers, postwomen, motor-drivers, porters, and in other occupations. The action

of the women has done more to further their cause than twenty years of agitation. Women, especially those who have lost husbands, sons, and sweethearts, are a much more potent factor in the country than the few noisy, flabby pacifists and mawkish sentimentalists.

In every way the country has changed. Such events as the Derby, Henley Regatta, County Cricket, Professional Football, have all gone — as jockeys, trainers, oarsmen, cricketers, and footballers are now occupied in more serious business, for which their former pursuits to a large extent fitted them. Even the face of the countryside is changed. New buildings, huts, and tents are everywhere. Here and there lumber

operations carried on by Canadian backwoodsmen; and everywhere khaki is blended with the natural surroundings. The people are not elated with victories or downcast by defeats. They are simply a sobered nation with the single object of carrying the business through to a successful issue.

FINANCE

War is business upon a large scale; and as no large business can be successfully prosecuted without money, neither can a war of the present magnitude be properly conducted without ample resources in money as well as in men. This war is as much one of factories as of

soldiers. The pre-war annual expenditure of Great Britain was nine hundred and eighty-seven million dollars ($987,000,000)—truly a large sum, but infinitesimal in comparison with the present rate of national expenditure, which is twenty-five million dollars a day ($25,000,000). The national capital wealth of Great Britain is estimated at seventy-five thousand million dollars ($75,000,000,000); and the national income, *i.e.* the aggregate of the income of every person in the country, is estimated at twelve thousand five hundred million dollars ($12,500,000,000). At the present rate of expenditure it is estimated that by the end of this financial year the total national indebtedness of

the country (including the pre-war indebtedness) will be seventeen thousand two hundred million dollars ($17,200,000,000), which includes at the same date four thousand million dollars ($4,000,000,000) advanced to Allies and Overseas Dominions. Deducting these advances, Great Britain's total national indebtedness at 31st March 1917 will be thirteen thousand two hundred million dollars ($13,200,000,000), or a little more than one year's national income. This and a greater burden can, if necessary, be borne.

The cost of the war up to date has been defrayed by:

1. Long-Time War Loans.
2. Short-Time Borrowings.
3. Increase in Exchequer Revenue.

The two long-time War Loans bear interest respectively at 3½ and 4½ per cent. The 4½ per cent. loan was issued in June 1915. Certain conversion rights were given to the holders of the 3½ per cents. and to the holders of Consols, and these conversion rights were to a large extent exercised. The amount of new money raised by the 3½ per cent. and 4½ per cent. War Loans is about $3,300,000,000. The bulk of the short-time borrowings is against the sale of three, six, nine, and twelve months Treasury Bills and 5 per cent. Exchequer Bonds running until 1919, 1920, and 1921. Approximately $6,900,000,000 of these two classes of securities have been issued.

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Other short-time borrowings are against Foreign Loans, War Savings Certificates, and War Expenditure Certificates.

The Exchequer Revenue for the year 1913–1914 was $991,000,000; for year 1914–1915, $1,133,000,000; for year 1915–1916, $1,684,000,000; and for the year 1916–1917 it will be $2,511,000,000. From these figures it will be seen that the national income for the year ending the 31st March next will exceed the pre-war income by $1,520,000,000.

Great Britain wisely considers that it should not leave to posterity the whole burden of this war, but that a substantial percentage should be borne by present taxation. The war revenue by taxation has been princi-

pally raised by increases in income- and super-tax, by excess war-profits tax, tax on amusements, and increased duties on tea, sugar, and coffee, and the imposition of new import duties.

Income-tax is now levied upon all incomes exceeding $650, but certain special abatements are granted in respect of all persons whose total incomes do not exceed $3500. The rate upon unearned incomes is higher than that upon earned incomes; but when the income is greater than $12,500 this distinction disappears. The rate upon incomes (less abatements) from $650 to $10,000 is graduated from a minimum of 11¼ per cent. of the income remaining after deduction of the

abatements referred to, up to a maximum of 22½ per cent. payable on the total income; and the rate varies accordingly as the income is earned or unearned. Unearned incomes of upwards of $10,000 pay 25 per cent. on the whole income; earned incomes of more than $12,500 pay similarly.

Super-tax applies to all incomes in excess of $15,000 as an additional duty, irrespective of ordinary income-tax. It is levied upon amounts in excess of a fixed sum of $12,500; and the tax is graduated from a minimum of 4⅙ per cent. of the first $2500 of the excess over $12,500 to a maximum of 17½ per cent. payable on that portion of the income exceeding $50,000.

Earned incomes of $1000, $5000, and $10,000 pay income-tax respectively of $45, $625, and $1833. Earned and unearned incomes of $25,000, $50,000, and $100,000 pay combined income-tax and super-tax of $7021, $16,396, and $37,646 respectively. Any possessor of an income of $500,000 pays to the Treasury a sum of $207,646.

In broad terms, the Excess Profits Tax is 60 per cent. of all traders' profits (husbandry in the United Kingdom excepted) which are in excess by more than $1000 of the average of any two out of the three years preceding the outbreak of the war. The duty is incident on all trades and businesses carried on in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere

by persons resident in the United Kingdom; and it is additional to income-tax and super-tax.

There has been no serious opposition to any of the new taxes, as the country recognizes their necessity.

Notwithstanding the heavy burden of taxation, the British public have responded nobly to relieve the sufferings of the wounded and others hurt by the war. Country mansions and town-houses have been turned into hospitals; places for the welfare and entertainment of soldiers and sailors have been provided; and voluntary contributions to hundreds of patriotic funds have reached unprecedented figures.

Whilst the financial requirements of Great Britain and for the aid of

the Allies are colossal, the country will make the necessary sacrifices; for it is of the same opinion as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who stated recently in the House of Commons:

"I have not the slightest doubt that we shall be able to maintain our credit right to the end of the war, no matter how long it lasts."

TRADE

Notwithstanding the country's national effort, which has withdrawn many millions of its best manhood from their ordinary avocations, and that the export of numerous articles

is forbidden, the trade of the country has been carried on with a minimum of dislocation. The railways, mines, steel, textile, and shipbuilding industries have all been working at full pressure,—the last-named not only upon war-vessels but on mercantile tonnage,—with the result that the exports for the seven months ending July 1916 were only 5 per cent. below those for the seven months ending July 1914.

The cost of living has unquestionably advanced; but this is set off to a large extent by the increase in wages, which with many classes of workers are higher than ever before.

MERCANTILE MARINE

Great Britain's pre-war tonnage of mercantile marine was approximately 21,000,000 tons. Up to date there has been lost by seizure in enemy ports, by submarines, and by mines 1,800,000 tons, or 8½ per cent. of the total. Against this loss can be credited 700,000 tons of enemy shipping seized and enemy shipping chartered from the Portuguese Government, making the net deficit about 5 per cent., without taking into consideration new tonnage created subsequent to August 1914. The greater part of the losses were sustained before the Navy had success-

fully devised means of combating submarines, and by seizures in enemy ports. As the enemy has only succeeded after two years' warfare in making a net reduction of 5 per cent., a considerable period of time will elapse before the mercantile marine of Great Britain is seriously affected. About 30 per cent. of the mercantile tonnage is now employed upon military operations, and 11 per cent. is in the service of our Allies. Germany has lost 20 per cent. of her mercantile marine, and the remainder is not operating upon the high seas.

POLITICAL

At the outbreak of war a Liberal Government, under the Premiership of Mr. Asquith, was in power, which Government would have expired by limitation in January 1916. Owing to a generally accepted feeling that the war could not be prosecuted to the best advantage by a Party Government, a Coalition Government was created in May 1915, in which nine Conservatives were included in the Cabinet. The Leader of the Irish Party was invited to join the Cabinet; and although he did not see his way to do so, the Irish Party, under his leadership, has loyally supported the Coalition Government.

By agreement between the great Parties forming the House of Commons, a truce to all measures of a controversial nature was called—and has been kept. All the important war measures have been passed by general consent. The greatest of them all, the second Military Service Bill, by which all men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one are subject to military service (unless exempted by statutory tribunals), passed with only thirty-five dissentients.

The life of Parliament was prolonged in the first instance until September 1916, and now has a further lease of life until May 1917. From August 1914 until August 1916 Parliament has been in almost

continuous session, and has enacted an enormous amount of legislation of an unprecedented nature.

FINIS

Great Britain was calm in the days of her severest trial. She is calm to-day. She knows that she has only to persevere, together with her noble Allies, to attain complete victory. When that day arrives she will have it in her power to exact retribution for the rape of Belgium, the massacres of Serbia, Poland, and Armenia, the deportations from Lille, and the foul murders of Nurse Cavell, Captain Fryatt, and many civilian men, women, and children.

Great Britain will be just but inexorable. The people will see to it that the great sacrifices that have been made by every family, from the highest to the lowest, have not been made in vain. In the meanwhile, as the duration of hostilities is unknown, Great Britain is making preparations for a long war, and is not leaving to chance anything that human foresight can provide against, as she is fully alive to the tremendous issues at stake.

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